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# The Hacker Files

Software 4.00

by Lewis Shiner

Tom Saffin

Tim Buckingham



I should have said  
about 1000000, but I  
was too busy to

[illegible]





Just because you're **PACIFIED** it doesn't mean they're **NOT** out to get you



THANKS, NOW WE'RE **SAFE** OF A **SECURITY**

NO, NO

In fact, the more I **THINK** about it:



the more **PACIFIED** I get



DATA PROCESSING

WHERE'S  
STEVE?

HE'S STILL IN... THE  
CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE  
HELL, HE'S IN THAT  
BUT DAMN

I'M DEAL  
WITH THAT LATER,  
OH NO!

NOT  
AHEAD!

Options: 1 Diplomacy  
2 Naval attack  
3 Missile launch menu

Enter number or initial letter/

digitronix

It's not making yourself  
only SMALL and crawling  
right through the GIGGLES!



then you're INSIDE

There are **GEORGE**'s here, the  
ghosts of everyone who ever  
worked on the **MACHINE**

In the distance I can see  
**PEPPO** and **DONNY TENTS**  
and even **MYSELF**

And there's **TOGAHO**, guarding  
a bunch of **PLUSH**

We've got lots  
of friends up



But that is MY turf



It turns out to be that  
sweet ABE I knew in  
Capeview Mountain



Now time it's  
GONE for GOOD



I'm not so worried about that  
PIL cropping up again

What I DON'T like is the  
idea that WOODIE is up to  
his EYEBALLS in this

I remember the first day at  
Pygmalion. He was just out of  
high SCHOOL, with a bunch of  
Control Data lectures he MIGHT  
classes under his belt.

OH, NO

He could already write in BASIC,  
COBOL, FORTRAN, and assembly

He had long and POWER that he  
always had to push about

Woodie made him kindly nervous.  
Especially KATHIE got it

JOHNIE, WOODIE I  
DON'T KNOW ANYBODY  
BUT JACK THAT IS.

We weren't MARRIED yet and it seemed  
like that we were "living in sin"

We both used to THOSE  
late evenings





But when it came to writing CODE,  
he really had it **TONGUE**!

MAN, THIS IS  
**AWESOME!**

THANKS. I JUST WANT  
WITH THAT RESPECTIVE  
RECALL: WSA YOU' MAP



Of course it didn't **HURT** that his  
uncle **TOMRID** runs one of the biggest  
Japanese computer *software*...



After we and Frodo got **FIRED**,  
they put **Tosko** in charge  
of systems support.

He wasn't **side**  
21 yet.



We went out for **TACOS** one last time.  
We took his new **MERCEDES** to their  
upscale **MARGARITA** joint.



IN **JOJO** OF **TRAVIS**  
THAT DON'T **HEART**. I WANT  
**CODE** THAT WORKS, A CAP  
THAT WORKS.

YOUR **LIFE** WON'T  
WORK, JACK. HOW CAN YOU  
STAND IT?



**SPECIALLY?**

How do you **ANSWER** a  
question like that?







JUSTICE. THIS IS AN A-2 IDENTIFICATION  
BETA, AND THAT BETA IS SUPPOSED  
TO BE KEPT LOCKED AT ALL TIMES.



SO YOU MEAN, AND  
LATE, USING "SAMUEL"  
IS BAD, RIGHT?



YOU BETTER HAVE A  
REASON? GOOD EXPLAN.



WHAT IF I TOLD YOU THERE'S  
A CONNECTION AND THERE IS  
NONE CONNECTED TO LATE HUSKIN?



THAT IF YOU WERE PLANNING  
JAMES IS HERE YOU'RE DOING TO  
END UP IN A BAD WAY.



YOU KNOW WHAT  
I'D SAY?



IF THAT  
DEMANDS! GET THIS  
CRAZY OUT OF HERE!

IT'S NOT JUST FORM  
FUNDRAISING!



IT'S  
OVERLORD'S



MAKE SURE THAT  
DOGS STAY LOCKED!



WE WERE ADVISED THAT TACTICAL  
NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE TO BE USED  
TO PENETRATE A RED BOMBING



WHO THE HELL  
WAS MCDONALD?

YEAH



DO WE HAVE ANYTHING  
ABOUT THE MCDONALD?



- Missile Launch Menu:
- 1 Enter target coordinates
  - 2 Select missile
  - 3 Begin countdown
  - 4 Abort launch



COME ON, BOB!  
FIGHTER--

HOLY GOD!



GENERAL PLUMB, THE NEWS-  
VOLVER IS HERE! EXERCISES FOR  
FIFTY YEARS AND I HAVE NEVER  
SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

I PROMISED TO SHOW  
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!



LIVE TRANSMISSION



WHAT WAS THAT BAY ID  
WEE-- JUST SAYING?  
SOMETHING ABOUT  
"LIVE TRANSMISSION"?

WHEE! IF THAT WAS  
A REAL ATTACK  
ON NEW YORK!



New York City



digitronix







WON'T TAKE BACK  
TO THE STAGE AND!



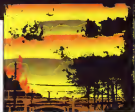
WANT



SHOULD HAVE DONE  
IT YEARS AGO.



WOW! DAME, CAN'T YOU  
SEE WHAT'S ON THOSE SCREENS  
IN FRONT OF YOU?



WILLING TO DIE  
ALREADY? DO WE  
THINK HE'S SCARY?



WASN'T THIS JUST  
A GAME. BUT WHAT  
KIND OF GAME PLAYS  
WITH HUMAN LIVES?



ALL IT DOES IS MAKE IT  
EASIER TO PROSELYTIZE  
THE BOTTOM WHEN IT IS REAL.



WHAT'S THE  
MATTER  
WITH YOU?

ARE YOU SOME KIND  
OF KNOCKOUT ZOMBIE?



PLEASE, PLEASE,  
WE...WE CAN'T FIGHT  
AGAINST OURSELVES.



WHY NOT?

WE...WE HAVE TO ACT.  
I'M ORDERING A  
STREET BRIGHT MORGAN.



**NO!**

THAT'S WHAT IF  
IT IS REAL?



YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR  
MIND! THIS BUSINESS  
HAS TO STOP!



GET AWAY FROM  
THAT CONTROL!

LEONARD









I know I shouldn't do it.



But it's been a LONG couple of DAYS.



I've got THINGS to DO tonight. It's right now.



No, wait! It's ME!



I need to sleep.

SHARONTE ADMITTED PLANTING THE BOMB'S REMOVAL THAT BECAME THE PENTAGON TO A LAMEY YESTERDAY.



Nothing more just think about you.

You don't you sound tired?



You know how it is sometimes you wonder about things.

How you end up where you do you know life?



There's no more Jack.



Life is simple.



Either the world is a better place for your grand baby here.



Or it isn't.

YOU'RE TALKING TO  
A GUY THAT JUST  
LOVES THE WORK!

YEAH, BUT WHEN  
A KIND OF WORLD DID YOU  
COME FOR LAST

IN IT WILL REMEMBER  
WILL REMEMBER AND REMEMBER  
FULL OF REMEMBER AND REMEMBER

YOU WERE ALWAYS GOOD ON  
THE JOB WAGES. EVEN BACK WHEN  
WE WERE HARRIED. IT'S THE ONLY  
UP STUFF THAT HELPS YOU UP!

WILL BE HARRIED YOU  
DON'T NEED ONE OF THE  
HARRIED FROM US!

THAT'S ONLY  
I ASKED FOR IT  
IT'S GOOD TO HAVE  
YOUR FORCE!

ALL I'M SAYING IS  
YOU CAN BE HARRIED TO  
BE HARRIED SOMETHING!

YEAH, I KNOW

YOU CAN COME TO THE  
IT'S NOT HARD. LET SOMEONE CUT  
IN FRONT OF YOU ON THE HARRIED  
ONCE IN A WHILE. YOU KNOW  
THE SMALL STUFF!



It's not OVER YET!!!  
But some serious  
QUESTIONS to answer:

Why the HELL?  
What were they  
trying to DO?

Did that dose ENOUGH  
for one day? I've saved  
the WORLD, and...

Wait a little. GIVE  
ME for GUILTY!!







# usr/hacker/mail

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THE HACKER FILES #1 was pretty impressive. If I were you, I wouldn't worry too much about how the general unknowledgeable public takes to your series. By no stretch of the imagination am I computer literate or anything, but even I enjoyed it. It's a wonderful mystery I believe I have an aptitude for computer knowledge and would really like to get serious about it, but I don't even possess a PC yet (heck, just this week I finally converted my phone to touch-tone!). However, I didn't find anything confusing about your tale, which should say a lot about your skill as a writer (go ahead, let your ego back, you earned it!) (He! He!)

On the other hand, it looks like everything a computer lover who doesn't read comics might be interested in. In fact, I hope to attract my brother-in-law's attention with your series. He's a professional computer expert for a major software company based in Houston. This may be the thing I need to arouse an interest in our common medium. If I'm successful, you'll hear about it.

In the meantime, I hope you can maintain the same level of interest for me throughout its continuation. I think injecting this into the DC Universe is a bright idea. A series like that has so much potential.

Chris Knefel  
PO Box 926142  
Houston, TX 77292

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I just finished THE HACKER FILES #1 and I was immediately compelled to write you.

This is a fantastic book! I have as many well-deserved compliments to give, I'm not sure where to begin. First, the book overall had a unique freshness about it. I'm fairly new to comic collecting, having only started just under a year ago. With these tight economic times upon us, I am very picky about where my comic dollar goes. A book has to really be something unique and appealing to find its way into my collection, and THE HACKER FILES definitely fits the bill!

Second, I enjoyed the way the book ties in to our own world, being based on real events. I will admit to enjoying a good "hero-in-tights saving the world" comic, but DC has hit upon something truly unique by using stories based upon reality in two series: THE HACKER FILES and SKULL & BONES.

I'm not much into computers; I'm writing this letter on an old Apple personal computer using Xenix 5.0—not exactly state of the art, but good for letter writing. I do know enough about computers to understand the story, however, phrasing, literary style, tone, pace, etc., and visuals are all familiar to me from news reports, school, and from hanging around with friends who were heavily into computers when I was in high school. How about some sort of storyline about computer animation gone haywire, or virtual reality?

Last of all, don't change a thing! Your artistic team is incredible, your writing style is tight and attention-holding, especially Jack Marshall's first-person thoughts.

That's all for now. I can only hope that DC will have the good sense to renew this series after the first 12 issues have run their course. One suggestion would be to keep it as a series of 12-issue mini-series, with definite beginnings and endings to the story arcs. Keep up the great work, I'm looking forward to issue 2.0.

Mark Demigella  
3502 Myrtle Street  
Irvine, CA 92714

Thanks for the good words, Rick, and thanks for plugging SKULL & BONES. While it's one of the most unusual and interesting comics in recent years, and an obvious labor of love for Ed Hennings, speaking of which, Jack Marshall and some "heroes in tights" will be visiting the Russian Commonwealth—and Virtual Reality—in issues #21 and #22.

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Though I'd received a preview copy of THE HACKER FILES #1 last year, I picked up the first issue to both support the title and view its contents in color. What surprised me most was that the book remained fresh and lively even after repeated readings.

Too often in the graphic medium, images need many times become stale. This is usually due to lack of originality on the artist's part. Truly memorable work stands alone and holds up after repeated viewings. It need not be large or "hot" to be well done and memorable.

Tom Sutton and Mark Bucklebaugh's work in #1 was fresh. Many of the layouts haven't been seen before. While it breaks little new ground, the art is solid. We are drawn into this world because it is so tangible. Nothing shines uncontrollably (people are in proportion). They don't do unusual and spectacular acts. While the spandex crowd may not appreciate this work, there are some who find it thrilling. This title is accessible to the non-comic reader for this very reason. Too many "nature" books offer attractive artwork that is inaccessible to new readers. This, I feel, is one of THE HACKER FILES' strong points.

And the coloring? Wonderfully dark. At times, faces were colored too dark, though a mood has been established. It's good to see the colorist as an essential part of the package.

I'd be wanting to see how this all develops.

Mark Lucas  
1185 Granada Avenue #2  
Los Angeles, CA 90048-9529

I was delighted with the coloring myself, Mark Livert and his team at Digital Chromaform outdid themselves in not only the consistent mood in the story, but getting that slightly dingy feel of the Pentagon corridors, and adding stories of anal nosebleed-color holes on the screen displays, to name just one.

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I just thought I'd write and tell you that THE HACKER FILES is just the comic we computer types have been waiting for. Finally, a comic where the writers actually assume we have some intelligence and don't baby us! I did spot one mistake in issue #1, however. On the top of page 14, Jack says that the difference between a virus and a worm is that a worm does not reproduce itself. This couldn't be further from the truth. The difference between a virus and a worm is that a worm is self-contained and virus must attach itself to another program. Your comic is awesome, but it really takes away from the enjoyment when you make simple errors like that.

Wesley Sharma  
8121 S. Park Road  
Kokomo, IN 46902

Thanks for the clarification, Wes! I had wondered why, given the definition I used (which is, I'm afraid, quite widespread), the Internet intruder was so often called a "worm" rather than a "virus." Now I know.

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THE HACKER FILES #1 made fascinating and disturbing reading. The opening two pages especially exposed the fear of every PC user in the world today; it makes me worry just word processing this to you now!

It makes me worry that the world now relies upon machines so thoroughly interconnected that it may now be beyond the ability of any one person to invert the disaster of systems failure and virus attack. Indeed, such a person in our real world would be a veritable super hero.

We have this innate fear of computers which we cannot help but see them as, somehow, alive. The careful explanation of viruses on your middle-page spread, clear and informative though it was, is obvious proof of this: not only do we give computers minds of their own, they also now have bodies prone to similar diseases as living creatures. And because those minds are so much stronger and more versatile, and mainly beyond the understanding of the vast majority of people, they are easy symbols for the science-fiction writer to use as the modern extension of power, which, as we all know, surges exponentially.

But the computer is only a tool, after all, and it only functions as well as it is programmed, as Jack Marshall is beginning to reveal to us—just as well he did most of the programming! In the hands of the overzealous, the human power-hungry, though, computers can be more dangerous than the most savage weapon you can think of—and at the real violence of the place are those fearless gentlemen who run that marvelous five-sided building on page 5, personified by, presumably, Subotick.

"Software" is, in many ways, constructed to follow the traditional storyline of the linear against authority, called in to save the day when authority wavers up, but it has been made more interesting by such details as Marshall's Hacker Nin—sort of a gang of Holmesian Baker Street Irregulars—and as real due yet as to who would wish—or be able—to plug the virus in the first place. If this were to be a limited series, I'd be happy with that, as it is apparently an ongoing venture after this introductory story. I hope and presume that you will be fleshing out Jack's tale into something more varied than you have been able to suggest in one issue.

What I'm glad you have done is to tie the story into DC's covert government agencies, with the inclusion of Steel as Jack's temporary "commenting officer." I used to love CHECKMATE, CAPTAIN ATOM, and SUICIDE SQUAD especially for their connections in this area, but all have sadly gone. We need a new direction and a new angle for these stories, and this could well be the place for them. Maybe we might see some of the characters from those books showing up here in the future!

Anyways, good luck for this new venture. Love that cover—both dark and vibrant at the same time.

Jim Jackson  
18 Adam Road  
Biggin Hill, Kent  
TN 16 3BP  
ENGLAND

SUICIDE SQUAD was one of my favorites too, Jim. Look for Barbara (Orion) Gordon in issues #5-8, and some sort of international tourist in the following issues.

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I almost missed the first issue. The logo, was, well, pretty easy to overlook...in fact, at first glance, I thought it was just another in the seemingly endless stream of Independents. Then the colors of the cover caught my attention and I had to pick it up and see what it was. Good thing, too.

After one admittedly quick reading, I think I like what I see. I like this fellow Marshall, and the way he refuses to become just another cog in the machinery. I like the way Steel was both tough and decisive and intimidated by the computers. I even liked what little we saw of the Speed Metal Kid (though I didn't expect it).

To be sure, there were things I didn't like. The page layout was interesting and, for the most part, it flowed well. There were pages, however, that were confusing and difficult to follow (the double page spread on 14/15, for example). And I found the "graphic representation of data" thing a bit silly...but this is a comic book, right?

Oddly enough, the thing that bothered me the most was the decision to use C. Probably just a personal thing...of course, I've been programming in Pascal almost since Mr. Wirth developed the darn language, and I find C almost

totally incomprehensible. Besides, I thought the government used ADA for everything (at least that was the language I was told I had to learn the one time I was intense enough to pursue a programming job with the federal government).

One issue is hardly enough to decide unconditionally that one likes/hates a title, but I will be picking up at least the next 2 or 3 issues before making a final decision.

RAY-MAN  
Glen

It's all what you're used to, I guess. C-Language is certainly popular, and I personally love it. By the way, you don't dislike all language names, do you? If so, you're missing some great common-core and Rockers, Hipcats, Trips—just to name a few.

\*\*\*\*\*

Got the first issue today, and I was impressed by the story's depth and complexity of the story. Marshall has his own rules and moral code, neither about nor sinister in any absolute sense of the terms. I'm looking forward to the next issue.

I'm afraid the plot and characterization are too unusual to make this a very popular series, but I hope I'm wrong. I just wish that I didn't think of John Galt every time I see Marshall. (gripe)

J. McPHERRIN (Jeff & Mary)  
Glen

\*\*\*\*\*

I've gotten away from DC comics for awhile since they stopped making the hardcore "meatier" comics of the Dark Knight era. But with HACKER FILES I'm back, and with good reason. Born somewhat poor, I never had the chance to own a "puter" of my own, but I've been fascinated with them since my earliest days. Now I've finally got my very first system (which is quite antiquated), and I'm hoping to be able to sell it soon and upgrade into more state-of-the-art hardware. My ultimate goal? Hackdom! As a result I'm seeing up anything that's connected with computer science-fiction, and HACKER FILES is exactly what I'm looking for.

Do you have the specific rights? Well, I don't know, but I'll tell you that I bet there are more kids like me hanging on every word, trying to learn from your examples.

You may make no claims that any of this is real, but you have said that you will try to make this as real as you can, so I implore you to stick to that, and let "reality" be the contentment of this book, not convoluted twists on reality for the sake of the story—in my book, it is dealt with "poetry," it's exciting, even if it's not alarm-bell-acting. Quiet suspense is just as exciting as exploding buildings (probably more so). I hope you understand that I have not confused reality with fiction here. I both know and understand the difference. My request is that you make your fiction real, so that we can learn and be entertained at the same time. It's not impossible, it's science fiction at its very best, and just think of the good feeling it'll give you to know that you've imparted knowledge to others.

Watch out for Austin, Texas secret service!

T  
(No address given)

Well, T, the Secret Service will be coming down on us like a ton of bricks next issue—see the Next-Issue Box below.

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The thing that I found most troubling about the first issue was the use of the title as hackers (even though their appearance here was).

What a marvelous concept! There are few places left for kid sidekicks in the comic universe, since today's readers won't accept that an adult would go around with a youngster, and certainly wouldn't put one in danger (Batman and Robin being a case outside the norm). But a renegade programmer who teams up with some bright, overachieving kid...yes, that we can believe.

PARAFRIMON  
Glen

NEXT ISSUE: Sue Denim gets a midnight visit from the forces of Law and Order, and Oracle gets involved—if only to stop Marshall from dismantling the Secret Service to get Jack back.

—Lewis Shiner

OCD Kicking ass  
and taking names



POOOONG

<http://ocd.conforums.com>

#ocd on newnet